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RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

NEWS

*"We must open wider the doors of opportunity....
for the good of our country and all our people"*

President Eisenhower

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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Washington, D. C.
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No. 2

STATES ARE MOVING AHEAD: We are greatly encouraged by reports from States, counties, and communities that are pushing ahead with Rural Development Programs. The following is a summary to date in which Agricultural College and Extension officials tell of meetings to organize Rural Development Programs in their States:

Minnesota: Dean Harold Macy held a meeting July 18 of agricultural agencies and organizations in Minnesota, and reports that "there was a broad discussion of conditions in Minnesota and of the (program). It was agreed that we would work together to plan a program for Minnesota."

Extension Director Skuli Rutford was chosen chairman with Hans P. Hanson as temporary secretary. Represented in the meeting were such organizations as Farm Bureau, Farmers Union, Grange, and Farm Credit Administration along with various agricultural services.

West Virginia: Under the leadership of Dean Harry R. Varney a State meeting was held August 10. Various counties have requested designation for "pilot" programs. An item of special interest was the report to the meeting by John M. Lowe, State Director of Vocational Education. He cited the "need for more industrial training of our young people -- only a small percentage of our boys and girls finish the 12th grade." He indicated that Vocational Education in West Virginia would be willing to help finance pilot operations.

Dr. Varney was elected chairman of the State committee, which will be expanded to include such organizations as the Chamber of Commerce, Bankers' Association, Medical Association, and Regional Associations. The next meeting is September 30.

Kentucky: A meeting was held August 12. Theodore S. Gold, Assistant to the Under Secretary of Agriculture, attended. Previously Dean Frank J. Welch had reported: "As a measure of our interest in this problem we added prior to the Memphis meeting, a staff member with specific purpose of his giving full time to the leadership of this program. He is at present working as secretary of the committee within our own Extension staff."

"We look forward to this opportunity with enthusiasm and confidence..."

This is one of a series of periodic reports on RDP activities by business, local, State, Federal, farm and other leadership, working together. If you have comments on the Rural Development Program or this Newsletter, please address communications to the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, 25, D. C.

A Kentucky Rural Development Committee has been organized with Ernest J. Nesius as chairman and Earl Mayhew as secretary. A steering committee was set up with one representative from each of nine different agencies. The feeling was expressed that in addition to this being an exploratory activity to alleviate low-income conditions, it will also be an experimental effort in coordinating services.

Oklahoma: At a meeting August 18 of agricultural agencies in the State, a subcommittee was set up to analyze the problem on a county-by-county basis and determine a county where pilot work would be done this year. Leaders attending the meeting emphasized the importance of strong local participation and organized effort within counties.

Arkansas: Dean Lippert S. Ellis presided at a meeting August 19 and was named permanent chairman of a committee with C. A. Vines, Associate Director of Extension, as secretary. At this meeting a subcommittee was named to study the county situation and report to the full committee about October 3. The importance of local leadership in the program was stressed at this organizational meeting. Assistant Administrator Luke M. Schruben of the Federal Extension Service attended both the Arkansas and Oklahoma meetings.

Tennessee: Dean John H. McLeod called a meeting August 23 of agencies servicing agriculture. Mr. Gold, who attended the meeting, reports that a Rural Development Committee was formed with an executive committee, which will provide leadership in the program. J. R. Sasser of the Soil Conservation Service is the chairman of both committees. The executive committee is made up of representatives from the five agencies mainly concerned in the program. It was decided that a member of the Rural Development Committee should be chairman for only one year. Thus the program will not tend to become the responsibility of only one official or agency.

The executive committee will assign teams of three representatives from the agencies attending the meeting to visit 3 counties in each of the major State regions. These teams will determine need and interest, and their reports will be used to pick the county in each of the 3 regions where a pilot program will be started.

Michigan: Dean Thomas K. Cowden writes that a State meeting is planned for the near future.

New Mexico: Dean Robert Nichols reports that: "...we are moving right along with our program here in the State and have already had several meetings with other agencies."

Idaho: Dean James Kraus writes: "Although Idaho is not listed as one of the 27 States where this problem is most concentrated, we are making plans to at least make a pilot study of this kind in one or more selected areas..."

North Carolina: Dean D. W. Colvard writes that there is an organization of the heads of agencies servicing agriculture, which meets regularly each month. It includes all farm organizations and agencies. The initial discussion of the Rural Development Program will be with this group. "It has been discussed informally with several agency heads already, and we have received offers of cooperation from several of the agencies and organizations."

Iowa: Ralph K. Bliss of Iowa State College used the RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM for his "Radio Talk" August 12. "Low income farmers are more than a farm problem," he said. They are a national, State, and community problem and there should be a united effort in the solution of their situation.

"Citizens and towns -- have a great responsibility along with agriculture in solving the low farm income problem of the million and a half farmers of whom the President speaks."

Oregon: Dean F. Earl Price writes that two counties have been designated for pilot programs of work with part-time farmers. "A group in the State is working on methods to recommend the type of program to be developed."

Nebraska: Acting Dean Franklin E. Eldridge points out that there are many farms of low income in Nebraska, although the problem is not acute in the State as a whole. "At present our best approach to the problem will be through our Farm and Home Development Program," he writes. "We will ask the steering committee for this program to review the material on Rural Development...and to give consideration to any steps which need to be taken in Nebraska to inaugurate the objectives of the Rural Development Program into our Farm and Home Development Program."

LOAN FUNDS AVAILABLE: Congress gave the Department of Agriculture authority to increase FHA production and subsistence loans by \$15,000,000 but the request for other funds was denied. The increased FHA funds will be available for use in the pilot operations which various States plan to carry forward with the limits of their present resources. (See item 3 in previous "News" for a summary of Congressional action on the requests of the Department.)

FAMILY FARM STUDY by a 15-member Special Subcommittee of the House Committee on Agriculture has the opportunity to make a major contribution to the Rural Development Program. Representative Harold D. Cooley, Chairman of the House Committee, named Representative Clark W. Thompson of Texas as chairman.

Congressman Thompson, August 18, discussed with Under Secretary of Agriculture True D. Morse, the plans of the Subcommittee to spend a week holding hearings during a trip through the Southern and Southeastern States. This will be in the area shown by the report, "Development of Agriculture's Human Resources," to have the most farmers with low incomes. Congressman Thompson was assured of the full cooperation of the Department of Agriculture.

RESPONSE TO FIRST "NEWS": The first issue of the "Rural Development Program News" was well received, and many readers have asked to be put on the mailing list. R. Lyle Webster, Director of the USDA Office of Information, has assigned Joseph C. Doherty to the editing and coordinating. One big farm magazine plans to give special attention to an item in the first issue that it believes to be especially timely.

COMMENT ON THE PROGRAM: In requesting several copies of the "NEWS" a community development expert, Morris L. McGough, who is executive vice president of the Asheville Agricultural Development Council, remarks that: "Anyone who has seen the results that are forthcoming in better rural living and higher income when an area such as ours launches out on a rural community development program cannot help but believe that this approach is the greatest opportunity in present-day agriculture."

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT EXPERTS DISCUSS THEIR WORK: Late in July a group of business, Extension, and area development leaders met in Cherokee, North Carolina, to discuss how to do community development more effectively. This was the 4th annual meeting of the Southeastern Community Development Association. The three day meeting showed a large measure of imagination and enterprise. Truman L. Brooks of the Tupelo, Mississippi, Community Development Foundation, is the new president of the Association. Here are some valuable ideas from the Cherokee meeting:

Youth should be brought into community improvement work through programs that appeal to them.

Prizes to reward the community showing the most improvement are essential in most area programs.

The church is the central meeting place in many rural communities and can play an important role in this work.

Techniques sponsoring groups can use to arouse interest include: movies showing model community programs; publishing magazines or newsletters and guides for leaders; using lecturers.

Newspapers, magazines, and radio-television stations have an obligation to publicize area improvement and needs.

Community development precedes industrial development and is necessary to it.

Trying to interest an entire community is often futile; area development organizations usually have to work through community leaders.

In organized community development, as many people as possible should be given definite assignments and objectives.

SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE Ezra Taft Benson, in sending his report to the President that has resulted in the Rural Development Program said, "The problem is more basic than low incomes expressed in dollars -- it embodies human values -- the lives and welfare of people and of families..."